Twice in a Lifetime

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by bethfrish

Summary

Some things you always remember, and some things you conveniently forget. Sometimes they're one and the same.

After-parties usually didn't agree with you. Too much noise, too much activity, too many drunk actors getting high off their own phoniness. But while the *Chelsea Walls* gathering had more than its share of boozed-up celebrities, you liked most of them enough not be bothered by it, and were probably tipsy enough yourself that you wouldn't have cared anyway.

Uma had gone home early to check on Maya, but Ethan, of course, had hung around, constantly beside you with his arm occasionally draped across your shoulder, laughing and grinning and toasting anyone who stopped long enough for him to raise his glass. It was hard to tell if he was drunk or if it was just that high-on-life kind of excitement. You figured it was the alcohol, but then you began to notice that the glass in his hand never needed to be refilled because he never actually paused long enough to drink from it.

"…so I told the cop, 'Look buddy, I know you need…' " Ethan started telling one of the cameramen, gesturing excitedly with his hands. You were pretty sure you'd already heard this story, or at least something like it. Ethan's anecdotes tended to change a little with every retelling.

When you sat down on the couch at nearly half past midnight, too sober and too exhausted for any more interaction, Ethan sunk down next to you, cradling his neglected beer between his hands.

"This is great," he said looking around. "I love this. This is where it's at."

"Your wife gone, you mean?" You meant it as a joke but Ethan turned to you and lowered his eyebrows.

"Hey, she was the one who left early."

You raised your hands defensively. "Okay, okay. Geez. I was kidding."

"She had to, you know, make sure the kid was okay." He took a sip from his glass. "You know those babysitters. I was watching this special on *20/20* about babysitters who steal your stuff and have sex in your bed. Freaky. I had to turn it off after the first five minutes."

You laughed. "So you'd rather remain oblivious to the fact that you're paying someone ten dollars an hour to have sex in your bed."

He shrugged. "The way I see it, someone might as well put it to good use," he said with a self-deprecating smile. "Two thousand dollar

mattress, you know."

"Not your idea," you offered.

"Nope. But hey, if she wants to buy overpriced mattresses, who am I to stand in her way?"

"That's why you're a good husband."

Ethan shifted and made a noise in the back of his throat. "Fantastic," he said dryly. "So you still seeing that girl?"

This time you were the one who made the derisive noise. "That was ages ago."

Ethan raised his eyebrows. "And…by ages, you mean, what. Two weeks?"

"Hey, now."

"But I guess that's par for you slutty Hollywood-types." He punched you in the shoulder playfully. Most of what Ethan did was playful.

"You know me too well."

You figured it had probably been about two weeks since you stopped returning the calls of said girlfriend. She was the secretary at your dentist's office, extremely needy and absolutely terrible in bed. It was hard to say, really, which quality was worse, but after two weeks of not having any sex at all, you tended to lean towards the former.

Ethan peered into his beer for a while and then set it down on the table. "So," he said slowly, "no hot date later?"

"None that I'm aware of," you told him. "Unless you're planning on buying me a hooker."

He coughed. "I think Uma has my wallet."

You turned your head and caught Ethan watching you intently, brow slightly furrowed. After you stared back at him for a few seconds he lowered his gaze and shook his watch out from his sleeve.

"12:30, huh." He glanced over his shoulder and then cocked his head at you. "You wanna get outta here?" he asked.

You stared at him. "What?"

"I said, do you wanna get outta here. Go somewhere else."

"But this is, like, your *night*. Why would you want to leave?"

He shrugged and made an "eh" sort of noise, suddenly looking rather indifferent to the whole idea of parties and directorial praise. "I don't know. I'm getting sorta tired. Besides, we've already been here for, what? Five, six hours?"

You picked up his beer from the table and took a drink. "Where did you want to go?"

Ethan leaned back against the couch and squinted up at the ceiling "Geez, I don't know. We could…well. I mean…" He rolled his head around to look at you. "I don't know. Go…somewhere."

Something flickered behind his eyes before he blinked it away, and you had to swallow before you could nod, almost imperceptibly, in agreement.

Neither of you said much as you weaved your way to the front door. It briefly occurred to you that your guitars were still somewhere in the other room, but you figured you could pick them up tomorrow when less people would be around to ask questions.

You fished around for your keys while Ethan walked around to the passenger side. "Uma took the car anyway," he said with a little too much rationalization for your liking, but you ignored it and climbed inside.

You and Ethan had only fooled around once, a very long time ago. You were nineteen and Ethan was eighteen; you were drunk and he was drunker. Josh Charles had walked into your hotel room to find you with your hand down the front of Ethan's pants. You couldn't really remember what happened after you'd lept off the bed, only that Josh had slipped you a Do Not Disturb sign at breakfast the next morning, and then had taken a half-assed oath that the only person he'd told was Gale.

You'd never talked about it with Ethan in the ten years that followed. No matter how much time you spent together, no matter what kind of looks you thought he might be giving you, you only brought up the final weeks of *Dead Poets Society* filming if you conveniently omitted that Friday night when the two of you popped the cork on that nicked bottle of champagne.

Ethan got married, and neither of you mentioned the fact that the reason probably had more to do with Uma's unexpected pregnancy than it should have. Those nights when he called at three o'clock in the morning asking if he could sleep on your couch, that was exactly where he slept.

Ethan slammed the car door and you drove in silence, first to the nearest drug store, and then to the nearest motel. Ethan busied himself with the patterns the chipped paint left on the wall while you gave the guy at the front desk two twenties, baseball cap brim pulled down over your eyes.

Ethan followed behind you down the dimly lit hall, and when you slipped inside you'd barely gotten the door closed again before Ethan pressed you up against the wall and started sucking on your neck.

"Oh god," you moaned, his teeth scraping past the curve of your jaw.

You tilted your head so that you could kiss him, pushing your tongue into his mouth while he slid a hand up the back of your shirt. His mouth was warm and inviting, and you could almost remember the taste of cheap champagne from the only other time you kissed him.

You led each other to the bed, under attack one moment as he fumbled with your belt buckle, the next pulling him with you while you slipped the buttons of his shirt through their loops. You fell back against the stiff motel mattress, pulling him with you, over you, until reality blurred and you lost track of what was happening. You pulled your shirt off and unzipped his pants, seemingly at the same time but knowing that that was impossible. His shirt fell from his shoulders as you pushed at it, shifting around as he tried to get your pants down around your knees.

"God…" he whispered as he flattened himself over you, pressing insistently against your hip through the cloth of his pants. You kicked off your shorts from around your ankles and grabbed at the waistband of his boxers, running your knuckles against the smooth skin as it was uncovered, drowning in the tremors of his almost imperceptible shudders.

You got his pants off and let them drop to the floor, reaching back around between his legs to stroke him as he pressed insistently against your hand.

"Oh fuck…" he groaned into your neck, hot breath sending shivers up and down your body that made you want to pin him down and fuck

him until he couldn't walk straight. He ran his hands down your sides, palms warm and cool at the same time, slow and insistent, tracing his fingers along the insides if your thighs while you desperately tried to resist pushing your cock into his hand.

He rolled on top of you, trapping your hand between your bodies and nudging your thighs apart with his knee. You pulled at his cock, rubbing it against your own and getting off even more as hot, raspy breaths rushed past your ear. He brought his hands up to your shoulders, lowering his head into the curve of your neck as he rubbed up against you.

"God, Ethan…" you managed to get out, pulling your arm out from between you and placing the palm of your hand against his back. He lifted his head and peered at you hazily. You motioned to the small paper bag on the nightstand. Ethan reached over and shook the lube out of the bag with one hand. He held it between his fingers and looked at you questioningly.

"Do you…" you trailed off, panting slightly. You could feel his dick pressing into your hip.

Ethan studied the little bottle for a moment and then pushed it into your hand. His eyes told you everything; you didn't have to ask.

You shifted over and let Ethan roll over onto his back, coaxing his legs apart so you could position yourself between them. He leaned his head back against the pillow, eyes glazed as he stared up at the ceiling, lips irresistibly swollen as he ran his tongue over them. You watched the discomfort pass over his face as you slid two fingers inside, waiting for his expression to soften before you inched forward with your dick in your hand.

"Ah, shit, " he hissed as you pushed inside. "Shit, shit, shit."

You leaned down and planted a kiss on his chest, catching the skin between your teeth when you glanced up and saw him smirking at you.

"You're not…defiling a virgin here," he grunted as you pushed in the rest of the way.

You bit you lip to keep from moaning. "…No?"

He blinked at you calmly until you pulled out and thrust back in, faster and harder than when you first started. "Ah! You know…what

I…mean."

"Hmm," you answered, and then you couldn't think anymore because Ethan's hand was in your hair and your hand was on his dick and nothing else seemed very important at the moment.

You moved against each other, jerking him off with one hand until the strength of your other arm gave out and you had to let your body drop. He wrapped his arms around your neck, moving his hands down your sides and over your back. You closed your eyes, gripping his shoulder so tightly that you were afraid your nails were going to leave marks. Your heart pounded in your head when you realized that you wanted them to.

You thrust against him, over and over and over, until Ethan cried out, "Fuck!" and came in short, hot spurts that pooled between your chests, and that turned you on so fucking much that you came only four quick thrusts later. You fell against him, chest heaving and breath ragged. You kept waiting for your ability to think coherently to return, and when it didn't, you slid up and kissed him on the mouth, soft and slow, and so much warmer than you remember at nineteen.

When you woke up and lifted your head, the glaring red numbers on the digital clock next to you flashed 4:24 am. You shivered, dimly realizing that you were still on top of all the blankets, Ethan curled up next to you with his face buried in the pillow.

"Ethan." You nudged him. "Ethan."

"Mmmm," he mumbled and reached blindly for the covers that weren't there.

"*Ethan*."

He cracked an eye open and squinted. The lights were still on. "Shut up," he cracked. "We paid for the whole night."

"Get up," you told him. "You have to go."

He rolled over onto his side and regarded you sleepily. You were about to climb out of bed to get dressed when he pulled you back down to him and kissed you. Your cock twitched, but you only sat there and kissed him back.

"Get up," you said again when he let you go.

Ethan sighed and dug the heels of his hands into his eyes. "Yeah, I know."

He went outside and warmed up the car while you went to return the keys. Before you left you slipped the Do Not Disturb sign off the doorknob and stuffed it inside your shirt. The man at the front desk puffed indifferently at his cigarette when you cleared your throat at him, sliding the keys back across the desk without giving you a second glance.

When you got in the car you tossed the sign into Ethan's lap. He laughed when he saw what it was. "Nice," he said. "Perfect for all the sex I'm not having."

You shrugged and pulled out of the parking lot.

"Wanna get lunch later?" Ethan asked twenty minutes later when you stopped the car to drop him off.

You yawned and wondered if his wife was still awake. You figured that she probably wasn't. "Yeah, sure."

Ethan gave the automatic lock a flick and reached over to put a hand on your shoulder. "I'll give you a call," he said, giving it a light squeeze. You thought about the difference a shirt can make.

You nodded and gave a tired smile. He grinned back at you, somewhat crookedly.

"Seeya." Your hands gripped the steering wheel.

"Seeya," he echoed, leaning back in through the door before he straightened and pushed it shut.

You watched his retreating figure disappear into the shadows, shifting out of park when you figured he'd made it inside—sort of like a date, but not really. Turning on the radio, you drove through the deserted streets, flipping mindlessly through the presets until you realized that you weren't really listening and finally flicked it off again.

You went out for Italian food the next day. Ethan ordered the lasagna, you got chicken parmesan, and neither of you mentioned the night before. You wondered if you ever would.

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